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UNCLAS DOHA 00353

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ACTION: P/E  
INFO: PAO RAO DCM FCS AMB

DISSEMINATION: P/E /2  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: A/DCM:MNANTONGO  
DRAFTED: P/E:MHUSSEIN  
CLEARED: P/E:GSTRANDEMO/RPYOTT

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FM AMEMBASSY DOHA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 6452  
INFO RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS DOHA 000353

SIPDIS

INTERIOR FOR NPS/INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION/D KREWSON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SENV](#) [PGOV](#) [QA](#)  
SUBJECT: QATAR ESTABLISHES LARGEST NATIONAL PARK IN THE COUNTRY

¶1. Summary. On January 22, 2007, the Government of Qatar (GOQ) passed a law establishing the largest national park in the country. Post and the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) have supported the project since its inception in 2000. The GOQ is now requesting further assistance from the U.S. to develop a management plan for its new national park. END SUMMARY.

¶2. On January 22, 2007, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, the Heir Apparent, issued a decree designating the territory of Khor Al-Udaid as a natural reserve. Khor Al-Udaid is now the largest national park in Qatar. The decree bans any activity or measures that might harm, degenerate or alter the beauty of the natural environment, wild life, vegetation, and marine life of the natural reserve zone.

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Background  
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¶3. In 2000, Post facilitated initial contact between the GOQ and the NPS. NPS sent a team to Qatar to assist its environmental and national park officers in selecting an appropriate site. The team then selected Khor Al-Udaid, a large tidal bay stretching nearly 25 kilometers into the interior, as the site to develop a national park.

¶4. In 2002, the GOQ again invited an NPS team to conduct a site-specific feasibility study of the Khor Al-Udaid region to develop the resource information and management framework to establish the park. In 2005, upon request by the NPS, Post sponsored the visit of two GOQ officials to the U.S. to participate in a study tour of U.S. national parks. This study tour provided Qatari officials with an overview of park management and the work that goes into the creation of a new protected area.

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Request for Assistance

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¶5. In September 2006, Ghanim Mohammed, Director of Wildlife and Conservation, and Sultan Al-Jamali, Director of Human Resources Sultan Al-Jamali, both senior staff members of Qatar Supreme Council for Environment and Natural Reserves (SCENR), visited the U.S. Both Ghanim and Sultan told Econoffs that the information and knowledge gained from the trip assisted them greatly with in their efforts to establish Khor Al-Udaid. Ghanim told Emboffs that they would soon request embassy assistance in bringing two NPS wildlife experts to assist the GOQ in developing a management plan for Khor Al-Udaid.

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Comment:  
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¶6. The GOQ is showing a strong and growing interest in environmental issues. In 2000, Qatar established the SCENR, a semi-independent body to handle environmental matters. The SCENR is making great efforts to develop its capabilities to protect and preserve the environment and train Qatari environmentalists. The SCENR is also working closely with other GOQ agencies to set environmental standards. Post believes that continued U.S. assistance with Khor Al-Udaid National Park will further the project and continue the close relationship between the two countries on environmental matters.  
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